NATIONAL
ENQUIRER
THE WORLD'S LIVELIEST PAPER

★★★★★ FEATURE 15¢

Vol. 41, No. 31, April 9, 1967

German Editor Who Defied Kennedys Charges Manchester Book Was...

BOBBY'S PLAN TO RUIN LBJ

Exclusive Interview Tells Every Detail of Bitter Battle Against LOOK, Bobby & Jackie

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

German Editor's Own Story of His Battle With LOOK, Bobby And Jackie Over The Book

By CURT WOLF

"The Death of a President" was Bobby Kennedy's original plan to lower Johnson's popularity by damaging his reputation.

• The Kennedys wanted more than just deletions in "The Death of a President" — they wanted a victory that would give them publicity.

• Bobby Kennedy tried hard to prevent STERN from publishing an uncut serialization of the book by applying pressure through German politicians.

• Jackie Kennedy is so used to getting whatever she wants that she is totally confused. That's why her request to delete some of the material from the book was ridiculous — so STERN refused to give in to her.

• The Kennedy family prefers Jackie to remain in mourning rather than lead a socially enjoyable life.

Their reason: To preserve Jackie as a national monument — at least until Robert Kennedy becomes president.

These are the startling assessments of Henri Nannen, editor of the West German magazine STERN, which defied the Kennedys by refusing to censor the serialized version of "The Death of a President." And they were revealed when this ENQUIRER reporter went to interview Nannen in Hamburg to learn the full story of his fight with the Kennedys.

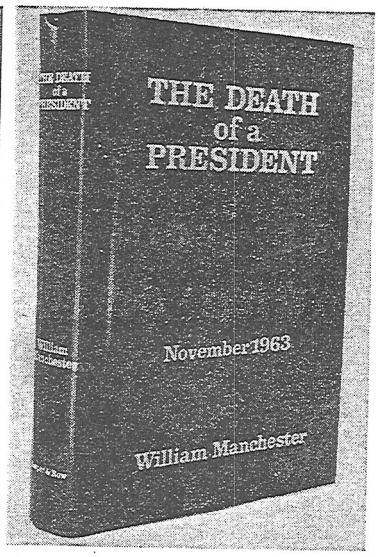
As I entered Nannen's large office in Hamburg, I saw that it was tastefully furnished with a mahogany desk and table, stylish armchairs and a thick green carpet.

A television set and a portable radiator on wheels added a note of informality to the elegant furnishings.

After we shook hands, the gray-haired and distinguished looking Nannen, who doesn't smoke, took off his glasses, casually dipped a cube of sugar in his coffee and munched on it. Then he leaned back on his couch, and his blue eyes seemed to search the ceiling as I asked him why he had decided to print "The Death of a President" — and if that decision was his own.

Nannen replied, "I decided to print the story myself, but didn't do so until I checked with several colleagues, who agreed that it was a good idea.

EDITOR NANNEN



In a 90-minute interview, Henri Nannen, editor of the German magazine STERN, told The ENQUIRER every detail of his bitter battle against LOOK magazine and Bobby and Jackie Kennedy — who tried to force him to delete certain portions of William Manchester's book, "The Death of a President," the tragic story of JFK's assassination.

Nannen, 53, refused to budge an inch. And here he gives a blow-by-blow account of STERN's fight for the right to publish the full text of the controversial book.

Nannen claims that the Kennedys were after a victory that would give them publicity and also wanted to preserve Jackie as a national monument — at least until Bobby Kennedy became president. In addition, his startling assessment of the characters of Bobby and Jackie Kennedy appear for the first time.

"And the reason is simple: John F. Kennedy is more than a man — he is a secular (inspiring) theme. He embodied mankind's longing for a gay, bright world. Whether he would have fulfilled those promises we don't know. But since people saw him like that, I was sure the book would sell well."

Nannen paused as he munched on the sugar cube.

"Fortunately, I was right," he continued. "STERN began serializing the book in eight parts, the first appearing last January 6. The circulation of the magazine, which sells for twenty cents, is usually two million copies — but that figure rose by 250,000 by the fourth installment on January 27.

"That meant the $72,500 we paid LOOK magazine for the right to print the book was already earned. But good business was not the only reason I printed the book.

"My deepest motivation was that I was terribly touched by the story. Gerd Bucerius, our publisher, is a tough businessman. But he wept when we read the proofs together in the London Hilton Hotel. This was the first time I'd ever seen Bucerius weep.

"In my opinion this is a perfect piece of journalistic work — a veritable masterpiece."

The groundwork for the bitter legal battle was laid when rights to serialize "The Death of a President" were sold to LOOK magazine by author William Manchester on July 29, 1966.

On November 5, 1966, Nannen, Bucerius, STERN's publisher, and Joseph Wurzel, authorized by LOOK to sell rights for reprinting in foreign countries, met at the London Hilton Hotel. Said

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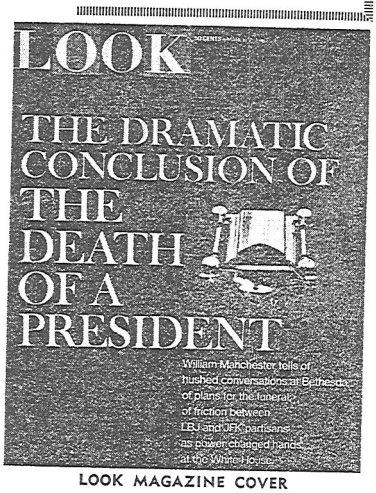
STERN MAGAZINE COVER


LOOK
THE DRAMATIC CONCLUSION OF THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT
William Manchester tells of hushed conversations at Bethesda of plans for the funeral of friction between LBJ and JFK partisans as power-charged hands at the White House

LOOK MAGAZINE COVER

NATIONAL ENQUIRER

© 1967 by Bent Medium Publishing Co., Inc.
April 9, 1967; Vol. 41, No. 31
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NAT CHRZAN, Editor
WILLIAM CONDIE, Executive Editor
JOE DEAN, Managing Editor
WILLIAM MORIARTY, Circulation Mgr.
VINCENT MANZO, Production Manager
Published weekly by Bent Medium Publishing Co., Inc., 655 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021. Phone: MUrray Hill 8-1111. Cable address: ENQUIRER NEWYORK. MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS $5 a year in U.S., $6 a year in Canada, $8 a year for foreign addresses. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations.

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'Convinced No Peaceful Agreement Could Be Reached, Jackie Decided To Sue Despite Bobby's Advice'

Nannen: "Wurzel presented the 'final version' of the manuscript, saying that only 'minor changes' were expected. Then, on November 14, Bucerius had a second meeting with Wurzel in Paris and bought the manuscript for STERN.

"On December 15, William Attwood, editor-in-chief of LOOK, also stated that there would be no 'essential changes.'

"But in the meantime, Robert Kennedy had tried to make LOOK agree to changes — and so had Jackie.

"They wanted approximately 7,000 words to be deleted, most of them being of a political nature.

"Such behavior was no mystery to me. Because a few months after JFK's death it became very obvious that Bobby Kennedy was striving for the presidency in 1972. This being the case, he had to try to get Lyndon Johnson reelected in 1968.

"For if Johnson were defeated in 1968, his successor — a Republican — might well be elected again in 1972.

"As a result, Bobby was concerned that Manchester's book, which clearly reflects the Kennedys' hostile attitude toward Johnson, not be published before the election of 1968. That is why on March 3, 1964, he agreed with the author that the book would not appear before November of 1968.

"But after November, 1964, when Johnson was reelected, two events changed Bobby's timetable: First, he won the senatorial election in New York by such an overwhelming vote that it showed how much he'd profited from JFK's image.

"And, second, Johnson's popularity was beginning to wane — due to racial conflicts at home and the war in Vietnam — so that in August, 1966, for the first time Bobby was more popular in the United States than Johnson, according to the Harris Poll. The two events had convinced Bobby that he might be able to successfully grasp the office of the presidency in 1968.

LEAVING TOGETHER: LBJ and Bobby leave hotel after dinner for supporters of JFK Memorial Library.

"So on July 28, 1966, Bobby sent Manchester a wire which the author interpreted as a 'green light' to publish his book before the previously agreed upon date of November, 1968. Shortly after that, an article in the 'U.S. News and World Report' made it clear to Bobby that he was chasing after a phantom — that the members of the Democratic Party did not favor Bobby, but were aiming at an open split between Bobby and Johnson. This, however, might mean that neither Bobby nor Johnson would win the 1968 elections, but a Republican might win.

"Thus for the second time Bobby was forced to change his timetable. He went back to his original plan of aiming at the presidency for 1972. The appearance of Manchester's book had become dangerous to him. Yet he could no longer prevent its publication.

The only thing the Kennedys could do was to attempt to prevent an advanced release in magazines.

"This then was the beginning of the argument between Bobby Kennedy and LOOK. At first Bobby wanted to fight LOOK in court. But when he realized he was getting bad publicity, he didn't want to become legally entangled.

"So when LOOK refused to delete portions of the book, Kennedy knew it would hurt his reputation if his attempt to censor the magazine became known. That's why he tried to persuade Jackie not to go to court.

"But, convinced that no peaceful agreement could be reached, Jackie decided to sue despite Bobby's advice. Later a friend of mine who also knows Bobby, told me Bobby said, 'Jackie simply ran out of control.' I'm convinced there was a deep split in the Kennedy family at this point."

Finally Attwood announced that a compromise had been reached on January 14, 1967. The terms were that 1,600 words, about 170 lines, mostly of private nature, would be deleted on the grounds that they were of no "political interest.".

Said Nannen: "Then the Kennedys' lawyer, Simon Rifkind, announced to the New York Press: 'We've got it. It's a total victory.'

"This was a very unfortunate statement, for it appeared to the public that LOOK was the victim of political censorship. And it appeared to me that the Kennedys didn't just want deletions — they wanted a victory that gave them publicity."

Nannen explained that he was outraged that LOOK had neither consulted nor informed STERN about its negotiations with the Kennedys.

Said Nannen: "I called up Wurzel, who represented LOOK, and he told me there was nothing to worry about, Richard Gruner, manager of STERN's publishing company, 'Gruner and Jahr,' sent a telegram to Cowles Communications, the owners of LOOK, on December 24. But he got no answer."

Nannen explained that when LOOK finally tried to contact STERN between Christmas and the New Year, Nannen was at his Italian holiday resort in Positano, by the Mediterranean Sea, and publisher Bucerius was in Switzerland.

"As a result, STERN didn't learn what deletions were requested by LOOK until January 3," he continued. "That day we got a new manuscript with the changes made by LOOK. But we disagreed with LOOK's interpretation of whether such deletions were of historical and political interest or merely private matters."

According to Nannen, at this point Robert Kennedy began to bring political pressure against STERN. Said Nannen: "Although Bobby Kennedy had no legal weapons against a German magazine which hadn't broken the law, he tried to use the influence of German politicians who might desire to maintain the senator's friendship.

AUTHOR WILLIAM MANCHESTER

THE LATE PRESIDENT KENNEDY

"And Kennedy knew very well whom to approach: Fritz Berg, President of the Federation of the German Industry; Ulrich Lohmar and Walther Leisler-Kiep, both members of the Bundestag, the West German Parliament. And Leisler-Kiep was known to be a frequent visitor to the United States.

"Lohmar warned us — without getting any results — that the new German Press Law might become very tight and strict, particularly as far as members or ex-members of foreign governments and their families are concerned.

"Kennedy even tried to get the Chancellor,

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Kurt Georg Kiesinger, to intervene. But Kiesinger came to my defense by saying: 'Is this a democracy we are living in, or not?'

"However, Fritz Berg, president of the Federation of German Industry, wrote us that it might have negative repercussions on the economic relations between the United States and Germany if we did not give in to the Kennedys.

"Kennedy also contacted Kurt Birrenbach, a high-ranking German politician, to get him to pressure us to make the requested changes in the book. So Birrenbach wired Bucerius, our publisher, from Dusseldorf, saying it would 'certainly be prejudicious to the German cause if STERN printed the full text.'

"Bucerius replied that only strictly discreet, private negotiations could lead to a successful agreement. And he asked that Birrenbach make this clear to Kennedy.

"But Kennedy didn't respect our request for privacy. Instead, he sent two telegrams — one to Bucerius and one to me — asking us to make the same deletions as LOOK magazine. The only difference in the messages was that Bucerius' was one sentence longer, which said: 'Thanks for the intervention.' STERN considered this an attempt by Kennedy to split Bucerius and myself.

"I replied to Kennedy that two issues had already been printed and that nothing was included that might hurt Jackie Kennedy.

"But he sent me another telegram, requesting deletions from the remaining parts of the book which were of no political interest.

"So I airmailed him a letter explaining that I would not delete anything — because in Germany the feeling would arise that important political passages in the manuscript had been sacrificed because of censorship.

"Besides, I didn't agree that those 1,600 words are of no political interest. Some are, some are not.

"And STERN is not interested in helping a senator from the United States to achieve his political ambitions at the expense of historical truth.

FRITZ BERG
Suggested giving in to Kennedys.

"We do not allow political censorship from within Germany. And we certainly were not going to succumb to such pressure from within the United States."

According to Nannen, as a result of the political pressure initiated by Bobby Kennedy — and the lies and half truths that were released by his office — STERN came under severe criticism from the public.

"The German press falsely reported that even author Manchester asked STERN to eliminate the passages in question. In truth, Manchester's lawyers did approach us, but strictly on their own. And later Manchester told STERN that his lawyers had acted without his approval."

Then he repeated his accusation, and added: "I don't believe statements that Jackie Kennedy didn't read the book, or at least wide excerpts from it."

Then Nannen pointed to an open copy of the January 30 edition of the magazine "Newsweek," in which Jackie was discussed, and read the printed statement: " 'She read every word of LOOK with growing interest and surprise . . .' "

When I asked Nannen to describe the deletions the Kennedys demanded, he replied: "They were in two categories: Political and private items.

"Among the political items were several anti-Johnson phrases concerning his supposedly bullish behavior, his eagerness to have the presidential oath administered, and the scene following the landing of the presidential plane 'Air Force One':

Stern Magazine Is Not Interested In Helping a U.S. Senator Achieve His Political Ambitions

CHANCELLOR KIESINGER
"Is this a democracy?"

LOSER? Controversy may harm Bobby.

'Jackie came down the stairs, Johnson wanted to follow, but O'Donnell and Kilduff stepped in between. Then, when Jackie reached ground and saw the newsmen gathered, she asked O'Donnell: 'Don't let Lyndon Johnson say that I was with them (him) and they (he) comforted me. Say I sat in the back of the plane with Jack's body.'

"Among items of a private nature were a love letter from Jackie to Jack, a paragraph on the way she told her children of their father's death, and contents of two letters Jackie and the children put into Kennedy's coffin. Also how Bobby supposedly helped her cut a curl from the president's hair before he was laid in the coffin.

"There were also passages that showed Jackie as vain. Instead of the phrase 'one hour spent in front of the mirror,' she wanted: 'she needed a long time before she was ready with everything.'

"A third group of passages seemed to be merely private things at first glance, but in our opinion they are of historical value. For instance: In John Kennedy's room in the Fort Worth hotel the second mattress had been removed from the double bed by Texas officials so that he and Jackie could not sleep together that night — which was to be JFK's last night on earth.

"We felt that this gave a good picture of the unfriendly atmosphere into which the president had come.

"Also, we saw no reason to omit a statement President Kennedy used to make: 'The three most overrated things in the world are the state of Texas, the FBI and mounted deer heads.' This is especially interesting since he had been given a mounted deer head by Lyndon Johnson."

GERMAN POLITICIAN
KURT BIRRENBACH

Nannen paused and sipped his coffee. "To tell the truth, I was quite prepared to delete certain private passages," he admitted. "But not political passages involved — such as the description of Johnson's bad behavior and several statements and scenes showing the deep rivalry between the Kennedys and the Johnsons.

"Because I'm certain that the book was Bobby Kennedy's original plan to lower Johnson's popularity by damaging his reputation — and I wanted that fact brought to light.

"After all, the aversion Kennedy felt toward Johnson began long ago. For instance, we know that Bobby tried hard to prevent his brother from having Johnson as vice president.

"Besides, I don't believe that there was anything wrong with Johnson's behavior toward Jacqueline after the assassination. Because Texans such as Johnson and New Englanders like the Kennedys have completely different kinds of mentalities. Johnson acted properly according to his own social background. Seen through the eyes of a Kennedy, however, his behavior may have seemed wrong, clumsy or tasteless."

PUBLISHER
BUCERIUS

Nannen explained that if LOOK had contacted him immediately upon being sued by the Kennedys, the whole argument would have been settled quickly — for he would have told LOOK that he would print what he considered of political interest, but that he might be willing to delete the rest.

Then he added: "But I couldn't give in to Kennedy even if I'd wanted to — because STERN would lose face by surrendering to his political pressure.

"But my only intention in defying Jackie Kennedy and publishing the whole book was to help and protect her.

"Because I knew that Jackie was terribly mixed up. And the reason was that she always got everything she demanded. As a result, she doesn't really know what she wants.

"Is she interested in being known as the 'Nation's Widow,' or does she prefer to be a pretty, charming woman in her thirties who must overcome a tragic event?

"She is in a real dilemma, and she realizes this. As a result, whatever she does, she does it with a bad conscience.

"That's why some of her reactions don't make sense. She's afraid that by remaining a living

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'I Don't Believe Statements That Jackie Didn't Read the Book'

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memory she'd miss a good deal out of life. But if she appears to have a good time, she feels guilty that she is doing something wrong.

"Personally, I think it's good that she has begun living a normal life of a young woman again.

"But I think the Kennedy family is trying to preserve Jackie as a national monument — at least until Robert becomes president. Because they very much opposed her decision to move to New York, join old friends, and take part in the life of high society.

"That's why I wanted to publish the whole book — so the world could see how great and sincere her love was for her husband and what a wonderful marriage they had — at least after the death of their son Patrick Bouvier on Aug. 9. 1963. If Mrs. Kennedy agreed to a full-length publishing, it would prove that the gossips who said many unkind things about her are nothing but liars.

"And it would prove that lot of rumors about the book's contents were wrong. For instance, the readers would see that Jackie did not hysterically beat up a nurse in the operating room of a hospital, that she did not secretly hide her blood-spattered costume in order to one day throw it at her rival Johnson's feet, and that she did not pull her hair in despair after her husband died.

ATTORNEY
SIMON RIFKIND

"I was convinced that Jackie's position would be helped much more if, for instance, I printed the letter she wrote Jack when on a journey to the Mediterranean Sea after the death of Patrick Bouvier. It shows a deep and true love between herself and Jack, and indicates that they were far from being bored with each other, as some gossip writers implied.

LOOK EDITOR
WILLIAM ATTWOOD

"Jackie herself wanted this letter to be suppressed.

"She also asked us to delete the word 'cigarettes' from a sentence where the contents of her handbag are described. And she demanded that we change the sentence: 'She examined her skin — and she discovered a first wrinkle,' into: '. . . and she saw she looked tired.' But we considered these requests ridiculous and decided to ignore them."

Cowles Communications sued STERN for $500,000 on January 18 in Hamburg Civil Court.

ON LBJ's SIDE
DREW PEARSON

The court was told that the contract between Cowles and STERN was bound by U.S. law which states that the copyright of a book remains with the author. Therefore the court decided that Cowles had no legitimate right to file a suit against STERN. Only the author could have brought suit.

Said Nannen: "I was overjoyed with the court's decision that we could print the series without omitting a word. And it put us in the position to be courteous to Jackie Kennedy — for by deleting certain passages it wouldn't now appear that we had been defeated by LOOK or Bobby Kennedy. So I cabled Jackie and offered to voluntarily delete 122 lines that offended her. These eliminations are not identical with those LOOK had requested. They are concerned only with the strict privacy of Mrs. Kennedy. For we respect John F. Kennedy's memory so deeply that we could not harm the feelings of his widow or children." Nannen gave two examples of the kind of deletions he made:

One was, "Jackie kissed the president's dead lips and hands." And, "The burial enterpriser (supervisor) was afraid blood and cadaveric water which were running out of Kennedy's head would be seen, so he wrapped it with plastic."

LYNDON B. JOHNSON

When I asked Nannen who had been helped the most by all of the publicity about "The Death of a President" — Bobby Kennedy or Lyndon Johnson — he replied: "After people saw how Bobby Kennedy acted, I think there was a backlash in Lyndon Johnson's favor.

"Manchester was the only one really hurt. He was beaten 'mentally' by the Kennedys."

A news weekly magazine, DIEZEIT which is owned by STERN's publisher, recently published an article — by Drew Pearson — which draws a sympathetic, positive picture of Johnson during the first hours after the assassination. This article appeared in the last two issues of The ENQUIRER.

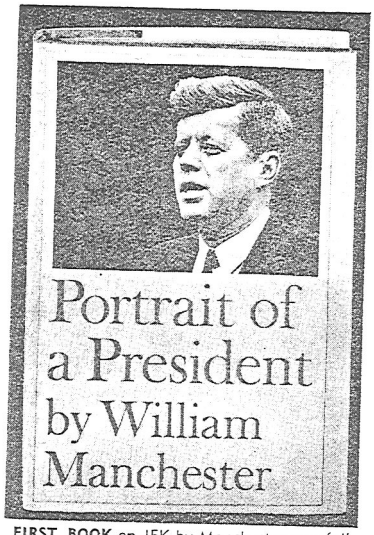
I asked Nannen: "Do you think that Drew Pearson's article was inspired by President Johnson?"

The editor-in-chief looked at me, raised his right eyebrow, and began to laugh: "Whether I think so? I know it is. Pearson himself told me. He rang me up asking: 'Don't you feel the other side should also be heard?' I asked what his sources were. He said: 'I talked to the President. You understand, in his position he can't very well . . . but he found it was a good idea if I did it.' "

'After People Saw How Bobby Kennedy Acted, I Think There Was a Backlash in Lyndon Johnson's Favor'

PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY: JFK and Jacqueline when they had free world at their feet.

GRIEVING: Jacqueline, her children and Robert at JFK's funeral. German editor Nannen didn't want to hurt widow's feelings and he offered to delete 122 lines from the book.



FIRST BOOK on JFK by Manchester was full of flattery and complimentary comparisons.

Why Kennedys Picked Manchester to Write 'The Death of a President'

William Manchester's controversial book, "The Death of a President," is under attack by eyewitnesses who say it's a distorted, twisted account of events surrounding the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Accordingly, millions of Americans interested in the truth are now questioning Manchester's objectivity as a historian and wondering why the Kennedy family picked him to write the story.

MANCHESTER

One answer may be found in Manchester's first book on President Kennedy, "Portrait of a President," which was published long before the assassination. For sheer flattery, it cannot be beaten. The toe-kissing book is filled with complimentary comparisons and phrases idolizing the President and his family, minimizing their faults and extolling their virtues.

The whitewash may explain why the Kennedy family was anxious to have Manchester as their "historian." Here, exclusively for The ENQUIRER's readers, is a review of that first Manchester book as a guide to the author's attitudes.

By HAL EVANS

Did you ever stop to think that the late President John F. Kennedy:

- Had more sex appeal than Rock Hudson?
- Was the most literate President since Woodrow Wilson?
- Ranked as America's Winston Churchill?
- Was as famous a quarterback as Johnny Unitas?; and
- Shared the traits of Caesar, Napoleon and Abe Lincoln?

Those flattering, almost idolizing comparisons are not the gushings of a sentimental adulator swept up in the emotionalism of the Kennedy legend since his assassination. They are the pronouncements of author William Manchester in "Portrait of a President," published in 1962.

That book was too complimentary to be controversial. But Manchester's "The Death of a President," is today embroiled in nothing but controversy.

Many eyewitnesses have publicly disputed Manchester's account, serialized in Look Magazine, of events surrounding JFK's assassination.

Errors of fact have been proven. Quotes have been challenged. And besides his inaccuracy, Manchester's objectivity as the Kennedy family's appointed historian has come under sharp attack.

So to assess that objectivity, The ENQUIRER reexamined his "Portrait of a President" — and found revealing clues to the author's attitudes.

Manchester, in his own introduction to the book, states flatly: "Readers will find that I revere the Presidency and admire the President."

And later, in the same introduction, he admits: "Occasionally, I encountered different versions of the facts; in those cases I settled for the account which seemed to me to be correct."

Almost invariably, the accounts which seemed to Manchester to be correct extolled the heroism, statesmanship and genius of the President.

Summarizing his profile of President Kennedy, Manchester wrote: "Really he is many men. He is a patrician and a politician; he is both a field commander and a scholar. He shuns emotional displays. Yet he is moved by poverty, and when he is crossed he is a Tartar . . .

"Although he is astonishingly candid, no one can keep a secret better. Despite his intellectualism, he is disdainful of academics.

"Despite his disdain for reformers, he has a vision of, and a plan for, global freedom."

Elsewhere, Manchester compares the President with the most renowned world statesmen, athletes and movie stars with such phrases as:

- "He appears to have total recall; nothing ever seems to be erased from his mind."
- "The best reporter in Washington."
- "Has more sex appeal than anybody, including Rock Hudson."
- "Is the most literate President since Woodrow Wilson."
- "John Kennedy, our Winston Churchill."
- "John Kennedy and John Unitas . . . probably the two most famous quarterbacks in the country and Kennedy, like Unitas, has thrown the long gainer on many memorable occasions."

Manchester quotes a friend of Kennedy as saying: "He once threw three perfect strikes to me. That gives you some idea what kind of a tough football player the President is."

On other pages, Manchester offers endearingly personal details about JFK and Jackie.

Readers are told for example of the President's favorite drink and brand of cigars, of what movies he saw and where he bought his clothes, and the names of Jackie's hairdresser and clothes designer.

The historical significance of such information is questionable. But there can be no doubt of its value at the time it was published in building and reinforcing public images of the First Family.

That may have been Manchester's intent, for he says in his introduction that " 'Portrait of a President' is journalism." And he adds that "today's journalism is tomorrow's history."

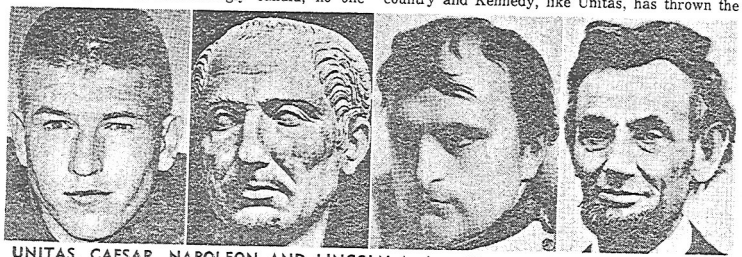
But journalists and historians alike might dispute that. Even technically accurate newspaper accounts can be incomplete and therefore misleading to any historian who might rely on them. The true historian, and even the good journalist, does not engage in a guessing game when confronted with different versions of events.

And he certainly does not "settle for the account which seemed . . . to be correct."

That admission by Manchester may hint at the reasons why the Kennedy family chose him for the job of writing an account of the President's assassination.

But, to the public, it can only cast further doubts upon the author's objectivity and the accuracy of "The Death of a President."

JFK COMPARED FAVORABLY with Rock Hudson, Woodrow Wilson and Winston Churchill, according to Manchester — in his book "Portrait of a President," published in 1962.



UNITAS, CAESAR, NAPOLEON AND LINCOLN had nothing on JFK, wrote Manchester.